

DECISION RECORD

EA Number: OR 056-01-016
Title of Action: Sontag Fence
Project Number: 73-7213
Serial/Case File Number: 4120
BLM Office: Prineville

I. Decision

It is my decision to authorize the installation of the proposed fence, which would consist of actions specified in the EA under Alternative C. Included in this decision will be the application of the following mitigation measures:

- Minimal fence line clearing of shrubs and trees will be done manually; no heavy equipment will be used. No trees (except post-settlement juniper) will be felled nor shrubs removed. Green fence posts will be used to blend the fence in with the local landscape, and their tops will be no more than 4 feet above ground level. Barbless wire will be used except at high livestock pressure points. Bottom fence wires will be set (on average) at 18" above ground level, and top wires at 39" to minimize obstacles to big game movement.
- No new roads or trails will be constructed.
- No mechanized fence building operations will be permitted during the crucial deer winter range period (December 15-April 15).
- Vehicles/equipment will be checked for noxious weed plant or seed matter before entering the project area. Any such matter will be removed from these upon their discovery.
- Vehicle travel during saturated soil moisture periods will be prohibited. Road construction will be prohibited. The permittee will be required to slash and waterbar any vehicle trails that run directly upslope and where understory vegetation has been removed or destroyed.

II. Alternatives

I considered a full range of alternatives, from not authorizing this projects, to daily riding and herding of livestock.

III. Rationale

The Brothers/LaPine Resource Management Plan (RMP) requires (on page 78) that a deferred-rotation system of grazing be practiced in this allotment. Such fencing would contribute toward continued refinement of this system.

The "Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management for Public Lands Administered by the Bureau of Land Management in the States of Oregon and Washington" cites (on page 17) fencing as an appropriate measure for meeting rangeland health goals and objectives. Implementation of this decision is both consistent with and promotes the accomplishment of the goals and objectives stated in these documents.

On March 21, 2001 copies of the EA (along with an invitation for review and comment) were sent to 14 individuals representing Tribal and State Governments; private organizations; and themselves. At the same time, a general notice inviting public review of and comments concerning the EA was published in the Central Oregonian, and posted on the InterNet. No comments were received from any of these people concerning this project.

IV. Compliance and Monitoring

Post-project monitoring will be conducted to ensure that the project and accompanying salting and other livestock management methods are leading to the achievement of allotment objectives for forage utilization amount and distribution, and rangeland health. Disturbed areas will be monitored over time for exotic invasive plant species such as noxious weeds. Any of these species discovered will be pulled and removed from the site, and reported to the cognizant BLM Weed Management Specialist.

V. Terms and Conditions

Land-disturbing activities related to this project will not proceed until necessary clearances for wildlife, heritage, and special status plant resources are documented. If any archaeological or historical resources are discovered during project activities, work will be suspended until such time as clearance is received from a BLM archaeologist. The grazing permittee will be assigned responsibility for the maintenance of the fences to standards acceptable to the Government.

/s/ Robert Towne
Field Manager

08/16/01
Date

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

EA Number: OR-056-01-016

Title of Action: Sontag Fence

Project Number: 73-7213

Case File Number: 4120

BLM Office: Prineville, OR

Based on an analysis of potential environmental impacts described in the attached environmental assessment, I have determined that none of the alternatives constitute a major federal action; that impacts to the human environment are not expected to be significant; and an environmental impact analysis is therefore not required.

My reasons for this determination are:

There will be no significant irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources.

There will be no significant, adverse impacts to water quality or stream channel morphology.

Cultural resources will be protected during project implementation.

There will be no significant impacts to Threatened, Endangered or Sensitive plants or animals within the affected area.

There are no wetlands or prime or unique farmlands in the project area. Neither wetlands nor floodplains will be adversely affected.

There will be no significant, cumulative or avoidable adverse effects on the environment.

There are no highly uncertain or unique risks involved.

Known Native American religious sites would not be affected.

The alternatives do not violate federal, state or local law.

/s/ Robert Towne

Field Manager

Deschutes Resource Area

Prineville District

Bureau of Land Management

08/17/01

Date